

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL APRIL 18, 2017

The Jasper County Council met this date at 7:00 P.M. C.S.T. in the Commissioners Room, Suite 202, of the Jasper County Courthouse located at 115 West Washington Street, Rensselaer, Indiana, with the following members present: Rein Bontreger, Stephen Jordan, Gerrit H. DeVries, Andrew Andree, Gary Fritts, Paul Norwine and Brett Risner. Also present were Kimberly K. Grow, Jasper County Auditor and Tina Porter, Deputy Auditor. Mr. Bontreger called the meeting to order and those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Fritts.

MINUTES: Mr. Risner made a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular March 21, 2017 meeting and the March 6, 2017 Joint Session. Mr. DeVries seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

VICKIE BOZELL / ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Bontreger explained that Mrs. Bozell was present at the March meeting to talk about expenses that will be incurred for the special election for the Tri-County School Board. She is unable to attend this evening, but she had previously given the Council a detailed accounting of what would be needed. The additional appropriation requests are as follows:

Election Board Equipment Repairs in the amount of \$563.00
Registration of Voters Office Supplies in the amount of \$700.00
Election Board Office Supplies in the amount of \$200.00
Election Board Election Board Members in the amount of \$2,700.00
Election Board Absent Voters Board in the amount of \$320.00
Election Board Precinct Board Members in the amount of \$505.00
Election Board Meals Precinct Boards in the amount of \$200.00
Election Board Publication of Legals in the amount of \$200.00
Election Board Part-Time in the amount of \$200.00
Election Board Travel in the amount of \$100.00

Mr. Norwine made a motion to approve the additional requests in the total amount of \$5,688.00. Mr. Andree seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance Numbers 2017-04A, 2017-04B, 2017-04C, 2017-04D, 2017-04E, 2017-04F, 2017-04G, 2017-04H, 2017-04I, 2017-04J**

JACK HABERLIN / ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Haberlin was present to request additional appropriations in regards to the NIPSCO project. The County vacated County Road 250 East and in turn, a new road (County Road 300 East) will be installed. He explained that the money he is requesting came from NIPSCO, but in order to spend it, he has to request additional. The total is \$530,000.00, of which \$470,000.00 is for the construction of County Road 300 East and \$60,000.00 is for Surveyor fees. Mr. Norwine asked Mr. Haberlin what the delay was with Von Construction getting started on the project. Mr. Haberlin replied that Kevin Sayers has been working closely with Von and even though the winter wasn't bad, there was some frost and rain, but things are going good now. He said Von also may have had other scheduled work they needed to complete. Mr. Jordan made a motion to approve the additional requests in the amount of \$530,000.00. Mr. Risner seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance Numbers 2017-04K and 2017-04L**

Mr. Bontreger asked Mr. Haberlin for an update on other projects, etc. He replied that they received the 67 Grant money and are now really busy, which is going well. They are unsure as to what is going to happen with future grants until after April 21, 2017. He said that there is a lot of paperwork involved. Mr. Bontreger asked him how much he thinks will get done this year. Mr. Haberlin replied that, last year, they chipped and sealed approximately one hundred and forty miles of roads and paved approximately twenty seven miles of roads. Mr. Andree asked if they've been using the grinder a lot. He replied that they weren't able to use it very much last year. They have three years to complete the projects that they got for two million dollars and are approximately half way done. They plan on using the grinder as soon as they are ready to put in culverts and widen some roads. He said the grinder works well for old chip and seal roads.

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CHIEF PAT WILLIAMSON: Chief Williamson was present and informed the Council that Sheriff Risner was unable to make it due to another meeting. He said the long-time attorney who represented the Sheriff's Department, the Indiana Sheriff's Association Attorney Howard Williams, passed away unexpectedly. Sheriff Risner has entered in to a contract with James Austin, an attorney out of Logansport. The attorneys that represent the Sheriff's Offices handle public requests for information, employment issues and Merit Board issues. This attorney came recommended by Mr. Williams previously and has represented the Sheriff's Department on an employment issue during Sheriff Perry's term. The charge to retain the attorney is \$4,000.00 per year, which is paid out of Commissary.

The next item he said he would like to discuss is the Safety Meeting that was held at the Courthouse. The way the Sheriff's Department understood it was, with OSHA guidelines, it was stressed upon them that it was important for the employees to have the Hepatitis B vaccination or sign off that they do not want to receive the vaccination. They have approximately twenty six or twenty seven employees that would like to receive the vaccination. The County Health Department does not offer it. After checking with two medical practices in town, they found one that does at a cost of \$300.00 each. They are going to offer the shot in phases, with nine series already ordered. Chief Williamson said they will be requesting an additional appropriation at the next Council meeting in the amount of \$9,000.00 to cover twenty six employees because they don't have enough money in their medical testing account. Mr. Andree asked if there may be anyone at the Courthouse at risk of contracting the disease when the inmates are brought in for court. Chief Williamson said the vaccine is available to the Court Security Officers. He said it might be something the Council will want to think about for Bailiffs and people in the courts that deal with the inmates. Mr. Risner asked if an employee does not want the vaccine, can they hold the County responsible later on. Attorney Monfort stated that the Sheriff's Department can have them decline in writing. Chief Williamson said they had everyone sign upon receiving their paycheck last pay period.

Chief Williamson stated that Rich Trail, one of the Drug Interdiction Officers, has been detailed to the Drug Enforcement Agency. In doing so, his overtime is paid for by the DEA. He said they've received the information from the Auditor's Office to give to the Federal Government so they can wire the money quarterly to the Courthouse, which Chief Williamson said they would like to see put back in to their overtime fund. Deputy Trail is paid ten hours per week from the overtime fund. The Sheriff's Department pays the balance of his salary and provides him with a vehicle.

Mr. Bontreger asked about the Little 500, the event that's being held at St. Joseph's College this week-end. Chief Williamson stated that they have the whole department on stand-by and are gearing up for Saturday night. They expect between four and six thousand people in attendance. The college will be paying a portion for security. The Officers will be working twelve hour shifts. They also have the State police and other local agencies helping. They will have a command center on-site, along with medical and fire protection and a landing zone for a helicopter in the event of a medical emergency. They've also put a plan in place in the event of a weather emergency. He said the Judges are on notice and have created a new bond schedule for certain offenses, so as to not over-crowd the jail. The Sheriff's Department has activated their reserves and they have Court Security, jail staff and extra dispatchers.

Chief Williamson gave Mr. Fritts a cost analysis regarding addiction costs. He stated that the top four or five categories are what the State has contracted to Child Protective Services. CPS currently has one-hundred and ten kids in this area. The analysis shows the costs to go to court and per-day counseling. It does not include the \$57.00 per day cost to manage a prisoner. He stated that some of the fields are blank because there are a lot of variables that come in to play. Mr. Fritts explained that he's been working with Chief Williamson to try to come up with some figures as to how much the drug epidemic is costing the citizens of the County. He said that it's been looked at as a criminal justice problem, but it's also a public health issue that somehow needs to be dealt with in that realm. He asked Chief Williamson to give an update on Teen Challenge. Chief Williamson replied that it was voted on at the Newton/Jasper Foundation to assist with donating money for the purchase of a vehicle and they've made fliers to hand out. Their next meeting will be April 25th at the Carnegie Center with the representative from Teen Challenge coming from Elkhart. They are currently looking to partner with someone that has a place they could turn in to a home. They've looked at a place across the street from the jail, north of the First Baptist Church.

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CHIEF PAT WILLIAMSON CONT'D: He said that it would be nice to have a place on the outskirts of town if it's going to be located in Rensselaer. The biggest challenge is donations and a home. Teen Challenge has given them a budget, which is very respectable and not what you would think it would cost to run such a place. Teen Challenge will supply the man-power. The treatment center would be for thirty days and then the individual would be transported to Elkhart to finish out the program, which would be an additional twelve to fifteen months. Teen Challenge would like to reach out to our schools, churches and people that have family affected by addiction. The employees of Teen Challenge are previous addicts that have completed the program, so they are very passionate about what they're doing. He stated that the Vivatrol project is almost up and running. There is a local doctor administering the shot. Our gatekeeper, Wabash Valley, is supposed to be handling it, but they currently do not have the means to do so. The shot is a thirty day shot that takes away an individual's desire for opioids and alcohol, but the individual has to receive counseling with it and we currently have a shortage of counselors. The Sheriff's Department has partnered with a church south of Rensselaer to provide counseling. Mr. Jordan stated that he attended the Republican Women meeting at the Community Center, where Judge Potter spoke. He said he was really impressed with the representative from Teen Challenge and that the meeting was very beneficial and full of information. He believes this is a good route to go and has the potential to help a lot of people and save a lot of taxpayer money in the long run. Mr. Norwine stated that he heard representatives from Teen Challenge talk when they came to the high school and he believes they left a powerful message that caught the kids' attention. Mr. DeVries asked Chief Williamson what kind of building they are looking for and Chief Williamson replied that it can be a home or rental property. He said Teen Challenge will make the most out of what space they have. The facility in Elkhart is an old warehouse with a facility built on to it.

LIT TAX DISCUSSION: Mr. Bontreger asked if anyone has any new information or anything they would like to weigh in on. Mr. Jordan asked Auditor Grow about the Kankakee Valley School Corporation property tax replacement credit. She replied that she's still waiting on an answer from DLGF. Mr. Fritts stated that he made a comment at the March Council meeting about funds being returned to the County and questioning the transparency downstate. He had some correspondence with Senator Hershman and was directed to the DLGF site where it shows our fund balances and it appears that everything is being returned, especially with the special distribution last year. We are basically at square one, with reserves being at twenty-five percent based on legislation we went through last year. There is an abundance of information on the DLGF site that shows the CEDIT and CAGIT fund balances. There is a two year lag on the return. We collect approximately twenty million dollars through LIT every year. That's also approximately what we collect on the property tax side, which makes it about an equal split. Mr. Bontreger stated that he's seen that same information. Mr. Fritts stated that there are some years that the County gets back more than what is paid in, possibly due to the stabilization fund. This makes it hard to make decisions when the numbers being looked at are two years old. Mr. DeVries asked what month the Council should be planning on making a decision. Mr. Bontreger and Auditor Grow replied that it's usually July. Mr. Bontreger said that he'd like to keep LIT on the Agenda until then. Mr. Norwine mentioned previously contacting the legislators about protecting the local property owners while not giving the benefit to the large corporations. He asked the other Council members if that is something they want to consider changing or, if they are happy with the way it is, keeping it the same. Mr. Bontreger stated that this may be a year to let it go, due to uncertainties with the recent changes. Mr. Norwine agreed that he's also been concerned with the uncertainties due to the lag, but wanted to mention it due to the adjustment. Mr. Bontreger stated that Umbaugh is coming next week to start gathering data to help the County with financial forecasting and fund management. He said it would be nice to have some of that data before they start shifting things. Mr. Bontreger mentioned that he heard in a meeting that some of the real estate concerns people had in regards to St. Joseph's College closing have not been happening. More people are getting other jobs and trying to find a way to stay in Rensselaer.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Mr. Bontreger stated that the tabletop exercise is Thursday, April 20th at 6:00 P.M. at Kankakee Valley High School. He asked the other Council members if anyone planned on attending. Mr. DeVries stated that he plans on being there and Mr. Norwine said that he may. Mr. Bontreger stated that he probably won't be able to make it, due to trying to get things finished up for the Little 500.

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MONTHLY MAILING OF PACKETS: Mr. Risner stated that he would prefer not to receive the packet in the mail each month containing the agenda and the previous month's minutes since it is also emailed. He said he wanted to mention it in case anyone else would be interested in receiving the email only. Mr. Fritts, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Bontreger and Mr. Andree all said they do not need packets mailed in the future.

DAWN HOFFMAN / APPEALS: Auditor Grow stated that Mrs. Hoffman presented her with a letter stating that there are no pending appeals.

KEVIN KELLY / JCEDO: Mr. Kelly was present and stated that he's working on a Job Fair that will be held in the Halleck Center at St. Joseph's College on May 10th from 11:00 to 3:00.

Also present was Richelle Winstead, who Mr. Kelly introduced as the new Director of Tourism. Mrs. Winstead stated that she's been posting events on the Tourism's Facebook page to try and generate more involvement. She also created a working link to the website, which has events, local attractions, lodging and festival information. She's been meeting with those in charge of the festivals to help them plan and make sure they have everything they need. She said she's excited with where things are headed and the people that she's met have been great. She told the Council to feel free to contact her.

OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Jordan stated that there is a pork chop and chicken dinner at the Fairgrounds on Sunday, April 23rd from 11:00 to 2:00, being put on by the Fair Board with Remington Catering doing the cooking. He said they also have a flea market and animal swap meet at the Fairgrounds that started the third Sunday in April and will be held every third Sunday except July 16th during Fair. Fireworks will be on July 1st.

There being no further business, Mr. Fritts made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Norwine seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Rein O. Bontreger, President

ATTEST:

Kimberly K. Grow, Auditor of Jasper County